

‘Considerate Friends’ Report with Recommendations for Cafes in Fishponds

Considerate Friends are a group of unpaid family carers and disabled people who visit local services to suggest recommendations and improvements for disabled people, carers and people aged 50 and over. The project works across the Greater Fishponds area and visits started in January 2018.

The project is under the umbrella of Bristol Ageing Better and run in partnership between The Care Forum and Carers Support Centre. Carers Support Centre supports carers to volunteer for the project and organises the visits.

On 18th January 2018, a small group of volunteers went to visit Porto Lounge on Fishponds Road and made the following observations and recommendations to cafes around their accessibility.

Observations -



The Considerate Friends observed the following positive aspects of the cafe:

- The staff were extremely friendly and accommodating and let us book a table for lunch for less than the usual required booking number because one person in the group uses a wheelchair. This ensured that we were in a more accessible part of the café.
- The menu is extremely diverse, meaning that people on special diets can usually find something to eat.
- There is an accessible toilet.

Suggestions for improvement –

- The doors to get into the Porto Lounge are very heavy and narrow. We acknowledge this might be difficult to change, but would make it far more welcoming to disabled people and older people if the doors were wider and easier to open. At the moment, the doors are very off-putting.
- It wasn't clear whether to pull or push the doors. Could there be a sign on to say, 'push'?
- Parking is limited near the café. We acknowledge that this is difficult to solve!
- There are a lot of chairs and tables crammed in, which makes it almost impossible for someone using a wheelchair to get to the accessible toilet or counter to order or pay for food. We had concerns about health and safety



risks of someone getting out of the café in an emergency if they were using a wheelchair. We understand why Porto Lounge needs to maximise the number of customers, but wonder if there is a way of rearranging these tables to create more space and considering having less tables?

- The café does not feel very restful for older people.
- The tables are wooden. We had concerns about the hygiene risk of germs spreading, of which older people and some disabled people with lower immune systems would be more susceptible to. Could they be covered in laminate?
- The counter is relatively high and so therefore not accessible for people using wheelchairs or scooters that are not height adjustable.
- Although there is an accessible toilet, it is hard to get to at busy times because of the high volume of tables and chairs in the café.
- Many older people experience loneliness. We would like to recommend that you incorporate chat mats in the cafes.

<https://www.coffecompanions.co.uk/get-a-chat-mat.html>